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Attorney's Docket No. MARSP0114US

Atk
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10/6/98

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of:

John Maurice Bird et al.

Serial No: 09/312,404

Filed: May 14, 1999



Art Unit: 2832

Examiner:

For: A COIL FOR A MAGNET AND A METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THEREOF

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

TRANSMITTAL OF CERTIFIED COPY

Attached please find the certified copy of the foreign application from which priority is claimed for this case:

Country: Great Britain

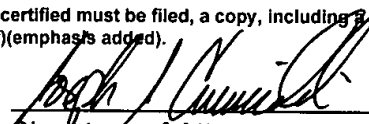
Application No.: 9810579.4

Filing Date: May 5, 1998

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Reg. No.: 41,690

Telephone No.: (216) 621-1113



Signature of Attorney

Joseph J. Crimaldi

(Type of print name of Attorney)

1621 Euclid Avenue 19 Floor

Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Address



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Patent
Office



The Patent Office
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE
Concept House
Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales
NP9 1RH

I, the undersigned, being an officer duly authorised in accordance with Section 74(1) and (4) of the Deregulation & Contracting Out Act 1994, to sign and issue certificates on behalf of the Comptroller-General, hereby certify that annexed hereto is a true copy of the documents as originally filed in connection with the patent application identified therein.

I also certify that the attached copy of the request for grant of a Patent (Form 1/77) bears an amendment, effected by this office, following a request by the applicant and agreed to by the Comptroller-General.

In accordance with the Patents (Companies Re-registration) Rules 1982, if a company named in this certificate and any accompanying documents has re-registered under the Companies Act 1980 with the same name as that with which it was registered immediately before re-registration save for the substitution as, or inclusion as, the last part of the name of the words "public limited company" or their equivalents in Welsh, references to the name of the company in this certificate and any accompanying documents shall be treated as references to the name with which it is so re-registered.

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Dated

19 MAY 1999

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15 MAY 1998

9810579.4

Your reference

230P77512

Notes

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The
Patent Office

Statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a Patent

Form 7/77

Patents Act 1977

1 Application details

1a Please give the patent application number (if known):

1b Please give the full name(s) of the applicant(s):
Elscent Ltd.

2 Title of invention

2 Please give the title of the invention:
A Coil for a Magnet and a Method of Manufacture Thereof

3 Derivation of right

3 Please state how the applicant(s) derive(s) the right to be granted a patent:
By virtue of employment in a company which is a subsidiary of the applicant.

4 Declaration

4 I believe the person(s) named overleaf (and on any supplementary copies of this form) to be the inventor(s) of the invention for which the patent application has been made. I consent to the disclosure of the details contained in this form to each inventor named.

Please sign here →

Signed

Markus D. Clerk

Date

15/5/98

(day month year)

invent rs in the b xes below:

Please underline the surnames or family names.

<p>Bird, John Maurice Stoneleigh Sturt Road, Charlbury Oxfordshire OX7 3EP England</p> <p>5604087001</p>
ADP number (if known):

<p>Palkovich, Alex 11 Portland Road Oxford OX2 7EZ England</p> <p>42955 49002</p>
ADP number (if known):

ADP number (if known):

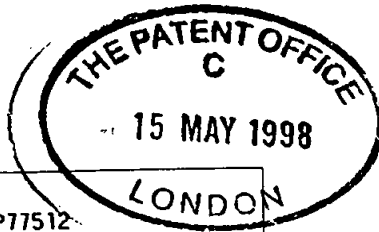
Please give the names of any further inventors on the back of another form 7/77 and attach it to this form.

Reminder

Have you signed the declaration overleaf?

For official use

15 MAY 1998


 19MAY98 E361250-3 D03312
 P01/7700 25.00 - 9910579.4

Your reference

230P77512

9810579.4

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**The
Patent
Office**

Request for grant of a Patent

Form 1/77

Patents Act 1977

1 Title of invention

- 1 Please give the title of the invention **A Coil for a Magnet and a Method of Manufacture Thereof**

2 Applicant's details☐ **First or only applicant**

- 2a If you are applying as a corporate body please give:

Corporate name

Elscint Ltd.

 Country (and State
of incorporation, if
appropriate)

Israel

- 2b If you are applying as an individual or one of a partnership please give in full:

Surname

Forenames

- 2c In all cases, please give the following details:

Address

 PO Box 550
 Haifa 31004
 Israel

Israel

 UK postcode
 (if applicable)

Country

 ADP number
 (if known)

404264409

2d, 2e and 2f: If there are further applicants please provide details on a separate sheet of paper.

☐ **Second applicant (if any)**

2d If you are applying as a corporate body please give:

Corporate name

Country (and State
of incorporation, if
appropriate)

2e If you are applying as an individual or one of a partnership please give in full:

Surname

Forenames

2f In all cases, please give the following details:

Address

UK postcode
(if applicable)

Country

ADP number
(if known)

③ An address for service in the
United Kingdom must be supplied

Please mark correct box

③ Address for service details

3a Have you appointed an agent to deal with your application?

Yes ☒ No ☐ → go to 3b

↓
please give details below

Agent's name

Marks & Clerk

Agent's address

57-60 Lincoln's Inn Fields
LONDON

WC2A 3LS. 4220 Nash Court
Oxford Business Park South,
OXFORD

Postcode

OX4 2RU

Agent's ADP
number

18001 7271125001 ✓

3b: If you have appointed an agent, all
correspondence concerning your
application will be sent to the agent's
United Kingdom address.

3b If you have not appointed an agent please give a name and address in the
United Kingdom to which all correspondence will be sent:

Name

Address

Postcode

ADP number
(if known)

Daytime telephone
number (if available)

④ Reference number

4 Agent's or
applicant's reference
number (if applicable) 230P77512

⑤ Claiming an earlier application date

5 Are you claiming that this application be treated as having been filed on the date of filing of an earlier application?

Yes ☐ No ☒ **→ go to 6**

please give details below

☐ number of earlier application or patent number

 filing date

(day month year)

☐ and the Section of the Patents Act 1977 under which you are claiming:

15(4) (Divisional) ☐ 8(3) ☐ 12(6) ☐ 37(4) ☐

⑥ Declaration of priority

6 If you are declaring priority from previous application(s), please give:

Country of filing

Priority application number
(if known)

Filing date
(day, month, year)

⑤ If you are declaring priority from a PCT Application please enter 'PCT' as the country and enter the country code (for example, GB) as part of the application number.

Please give the date in all number format, for example, 31/05/90 for 31 May 1990.

Please mark correct box

Please mark correct box

- The answer must be 'No' if:
 any applicant is not an inventor
 there is an inventor who is not an applicant, or
 applicant is a corporate body.

⑤ Please supply duplicates of claim(s), abstract, description and drawing(s).

Please mark correct box(es)

- ① You or your appointed agent (see Rule 90 of the Patents Rules 1990) must sign this request.

Please sign here →

A completed fee sheet should preferably accompany the fee.

Inventorship

- 7 Are you (the applicant or applicants) the sole inventor or the joint inventors?

Please mark correct box

Yes ☐

No ☒

A Statement of Inventorship on Patents Form 7/77 will need to be filed (see Rule 15).

⑥ Checklist

- 8a Please fill in the number of sheets for each of the following types of document contained in this application.

Continuation sheets for this Patents Form 1/77

Claim(s) 2

Description 7

Abstract 1

Drawing(s) (Informal) 4 + 4

- 8b Which of the following documents also accompanies the application?

Priority documents (please state how many)

Translation(s) of Priority documents (please state how many)

Patents Form 7/77 - Statement of Inventorship and Right to Grant (please state how many)

Patents Form 9/77 - Preliminary Examination/Search

Patents Form 10/77 - Request for Substantive Examination

⑨ Request

I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signed *W Jones & Clerk*

Date 15/5/98
(day month year)

Please return the completed form, attachments and duplicates where requested, together with the prescribed fee to:

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 The Patent Office
 Cardiff Road
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 Gwent
 NP9 1RH

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 25 Southampton Buildings
 London
 WC2A 1AY

A Coil for a Magnet and a Method of Manufacture Thereof

This invention relates to a coil for a magnet and to a method of manufacturing a coil for a magnet. More particularly, it relates to a gradient coil and to a method of manufacturing a gradient coil and, in particular to a gradient coil for use in a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) system.

MRI systems are used today for investigating a large variety of body parts. These systems are based on nuclear phenomena displayed by atomic nuclei having a non-zero magnetic moment (or "spin"). When such nuclei are placed in a static, uniform magnetic field, the nuclear spins are aligned by the magnetic field so as to be either aligned with or against the static magnetic field. The nuclear spins are not stationary, but precess around an axis defined by the magnetic field. The frequency at which the spins precess is known as the "Larmor frequency" ω_0 . The Larmor frequency is given by

$$\omega_0 = \gamma B_0 \quad (1)$$

where γ is the gyromagnetic ratio of the nucleus and B_0 is the applied magnetic field. For a hydrogen nucleus, $\gamma = 42.57 \text{ MHz/T}$.

When the nuclear spins are aligned in the static magnetic field B_0 , it is possible to "flip" the spins by applying an alternating magnetic field B_1 . In order to do this, the alternating magnetic field must be at 90° to the static magnetic field and it must alternate at substantially the Larmor frequency. When such an alternating field B_1 is applied the spins will tend to align themselves parallel to B_1 , and when the alternating field is removed the spins will relax back into the state in which they are aligned with the static magnetic field B_0 . The alignment of the spins with the alternating field

decreases the magnetisation in the longitudinal direction (parallel to B_0) and increases the magnetisation in the transverse plane (that is, the plane perpendicular to B_0), and the subsequent relaxation of the spins when the alternating field is removed produces the reverse effects. These changes in the magnetisation are detected in the MRI process, and are processed to provide a visible display of the nuclei.

Figure 1 at 11 shows a typical MRI system in block diagram form. The magnet 12 provides the static magnetic field B_0 . In principle, the magnet 12 could be a superconductive magnet, an electro-magnet or a permanent magnet. However, a superconducting magnet is commonly used, since these readily provide a large, homogeneous static magnetic field. The magnet 12 contains a bore 12 enabling the entry of a patient into the static magnetic field. A patient shown at 14 is inserted into the bore 13 using bed arrangement 16 so as to be within the static magnetic field.

Radio frequency (r.f.) pulses generated by transmitter 22 and applied through multiplexer 23 and radio frequency coil apparatus 24 act to tip the aligned spins so as to have a projection, for example, in the X, Z plane; the X, Y plane or the Y, Z plane. The X, Y and Z nomenclature refers to the imaginary orthogonal axes shown at 21 used in describing MRI systems; where the Z axis is an axis co-axial with the axis of the bore hole. The Y axis is the vertical axis extending from the centre of the magnetic field and the X axis is the corresponding horizontal axis orthogonal to the other axes.

The spins when realigning after the radio frequency pulse is removed generate free induction decay (F.I.D.) signals which are received by the radio frequency coil apparatus 24 and transmitted through the multiplexer to the receiving circuit 26. From the receiving circuit the received signals go through the controller 25 to an image processor 27. The image processor works in conjunction with a display memory 28 to provide the image displayed on display monitor 29. It should be noted that the radio frequency coil apparatus 24 can comprise separate coils for transmitting and receiving or the same coil apparatus 24 could be used for both transmitting and receiving the r.f. pulses.

In order to spatially resolve the MRI signal, encoding signals within the static magnetic field are provided by gradient coils (not shown in Figure 1). There are typically three sets of gradient coils. X gradient coils alter the strength of the static magnetic field along the X axis, Y gradient coils alter the strength of the static magnetic field along the Y axis, and Z gradient coils alter the strength of the static magnetic field along the Z axis. The strength of the static magnetic field along other axes, such as the XZ axis for example, can be changed using two or three of the gradient coils in combination.

The X, Y and Z gradient coils are driven by X gradient driver 17, Y gradient driver 18 and Z gradient driver 19, respectively. It is possible to modify the static magnetic field B_0 using the gradient coils so that only nuclei within a small volume element of the patient have a Larmor frequency equal to the frequency of the r.f. field B_1 . This means that the F.I.D. signal comes only from nuclei within that volume element of the patient. In practice the gradient coils are supplied with time-varying electrical currents from a power supply, such as a power amplifier, so that the volume element in which the nuclei have a Larmor frequency equal to the frequency of the applied r.f. field is scanned over the patient so as to build up a 2-D or 3-D image of the patient.

A typical prior art set of gradient coils is disclosed in, for example, "Foundations of Medical Imaging" by Z.H. Cho et al (published by Wiley International), and is shown schematically in Figure 2. The X gradient coils are shown in Figure 2(a). Figures 2(b) and 2(c) show the Y gradient coils and the Z gradient coils respectively.

It will be noted that the X gradient coils and the Y gradient coils shown in Figures 2(a) and 2(b) are in the form of saddle coils. In each case, two saddle coils are placed either side of the $Z = 0$ plane.

In the prior art, the gradient coils are constructed over a tubular base. In one possible arrangement, the X gradient coils are disposed over the tubular base, the Z gradient coils are placed over the X gradient coils, and finally the Y gradient coils are placed

over the Z gradient coils (although the order in which the gradient coils are provided on the former is not limited to this particular order).

As shown in Figure 2(c), the Z gradient coils are axial coils of solenoidal form. These axial coils are wound into pre-formed slots in an insulating former. The former is prepared by machining grooves in a fibreglass tube. The tube is then split into four sections, which are glued to the top of the X gradient coils. The Z gradient coils are then wound in the grooves in the fibreglass former using copper wire or copper bar 42. Figure 3(a) is a side view of such a prior art former 40 showing the grooves 41, and Figure 3(b) is an end view of the former of Figure 3(a).

To reduce the noise created by the Z gradient coils when they are energised, the grooves 41 in the former 40 are lined with a rubber sheet 43, as shown in Figure 4 which is an enlarged partial sectional view of the former of Figure 3(a). The rubber sheet 43 acts as a shock absorber and damps the vibration of the Z gradient coils thereby reducing the maximum acceleration of the coils and the noise generated by the coils in use (the vibrations are caused by the coils moving as a result of the magnetic forces acting on the coils).

It can therefore be seen that the prior art method of constructing the Z gradient coil is expensive. In particular, the construction of finely machined thin-walled glass-fibre tubes further cut into four sections is very costly. Moreover, two winding steps are required after the former has been glued in position: firstly the grooves are lined with the rubber sheet 43 and then, secondly, the copper wire or bar is wound into the rubber-lined grooves.

A first aspect of the present invention provides a method of manufacturing a coil for a magnet comprising: providing a curved former; and disposing an electrical conductor around the former;

wherein the step of providing the curved former comprises the steps of:

- a) manufacturing the former in a flat or substantially flat shape; and

b) bending the former into a curved shape.

This method of the invention allows the former to be made in one piece and then bent into position around the underlying components. Thus, the former can be made of flat moulded elements, and these are much cheaper than machined ones.

In a preferred embodiment the former is manufactured from a resilient material. This eliminates the need to dispose a rubber layer on the former before winding the conductor.

A second aspect of the present invention provides a coil for a magnet, the coil comprising a resilient former and an electrical conductor disposed around the former. Use of a resilient former eliminates the need to provide a layer of rubber between the former and the conductor.

In a preferred embodiment the former is made of an elastomeric material.

The present invention also provides an MRI system comprising a coil as defined above. In a preferred embodiment the magnet constitutes a gradient coil of the MRI system.

The present invention also provides a method of manufacturing a coil for a magnet comprising the step of disposing an electrical conductor around a resilient former.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which

Figure 1 is a schematic view of an MRI system;

Figures 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) are schematic views of a prior art set of X, Y and Z gradient coils;

Figure 3(a) is a side view of a prior art former on which the Z gradient coil is wound;

Figure 3(b) is a partial sectional view of the former of Figure 3(a); and Figure 4 is an enlarged partial view of Figure 3(a).

In the present invention the former on which the Z gradient coil is wound is constructed in one piece. It is moulded as a flat former, from a flexible, resilient material. The grooves in the former are formed during the moulding process by using a suitably shaped mould.

Since the former is moulded in a flexible material it can easily be bent into a tubular shape around the X gradient coil or other underlying component. The moulded former may be secured onto the underlying component by any suitable means - for example by gluing. Once the former has been secured in place, the Z gradient coils can be wound in the grooves in the former by any conventional winding process.

Moreover, since the former is moulded from a flexible, resilient material it is not necessary to line the grooves in the former with the elastic sheet 43, since the former itself will damp the vibrations of the windings. The use of an flexible, resilient former thus provides a further simplification of the manufacture of the coil.

The former can be made from any resilient, electrically insulating material that is sufficiently flexible to be bent into a tube around the X gradient coils or other underlying component (which will typically have a radius of 600-800mm). An example of a suitable material would be an elastomeric material, for example such as a rubber or flexible epoxy resin system.

Although the former is made of a flexible, resilient material in a preferred embodiment of the invention, the invention is not limited to this. For example, it would be possible to use a former made in two or more curved parts, as in the conventional method, but manufactured from a resilient material. Using such a former would allow the step of lining the grooves with elastic to be eliminated thus simplifying the manufacture of the

magnet to some extent. However, the step of aligning the constituent parts of the former would not be eliminated if this former were used.

Conversely, the former could be moulded as a flat former, but using a material which was not sufficiently resilient to absorb all the vibrations of the electrical conductors. Once this former had been bent around the X gradient coil or other underlying component and secured in place it would be necessary to line the former with rubber before winding the electrical conductor. While this would not achieve the full advantage of using a flexible, resilient former it would nevertheless have some advantage over the conventional method, since it would eliminate the steps of dividing the former into four parts and positioning them individually on the X gradient coil or other underlying component.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to the Z gradient coils of a magnet for an MRI system, the invention is not limited to this. On the contrary, the present invention can be applied to any magnetic device which comprises an electrical conductor wound around a former such as a superconductive or resistive coil of an MRI magnet for producing the principal (B_0) magnetic field.

CLAIMS:

1. A method of manufacturing a coil for a magnet comprising: providing a curved former; and disposing an electrical conductor around the former;
wherein the step of providing the curved former comprises the steps of:
 - a) manufacturing the former in a flat or substantially flat shape; and
 - b) bending the former into a curved shape.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the former is manufactured from a flexible material.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2 wherein the former is manufactured from a resilient material.
4. A method as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein the flat or substantially flat former is formed by moulding.
5. A method as claimed in any preceding claim and further comprising the step of securing the former after the step of bending the former.
6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the former comprises a groove and the electrical conductor is disposed in the groove.
7. A coil for a magnet, the coil comprising a resilient former and an electrical conductor disposed around the former.
8. A coil as claimed in claim 7 wherein the former is made of an elastomeric material.
9. A coil as claimed in claim 7 or 8 wherein a groove is defined in the former and the electrical conductor is disposed in the groove.

10. A coil as claimed in any of claims 7 to 9 wherein the former is tubular.
11. An MRI system comprising a coil as defined in any of claims 7 to 10, the coil constituting a gradient coil of the MRI system.
12. A method of manufacturing a coil for a magnet comprising the step of disposing an electrical conductor around a resilient former.

A Coil for a Magnet and a Method of Manufacture Thereof

Abstract

A magnet comprises an electrical conductor wound over a tubular former. The former is initially produced as a flat former, and it is bent into a tubular shape. The former is made of a resilient material to absorb vibrations of the electrical conductor.

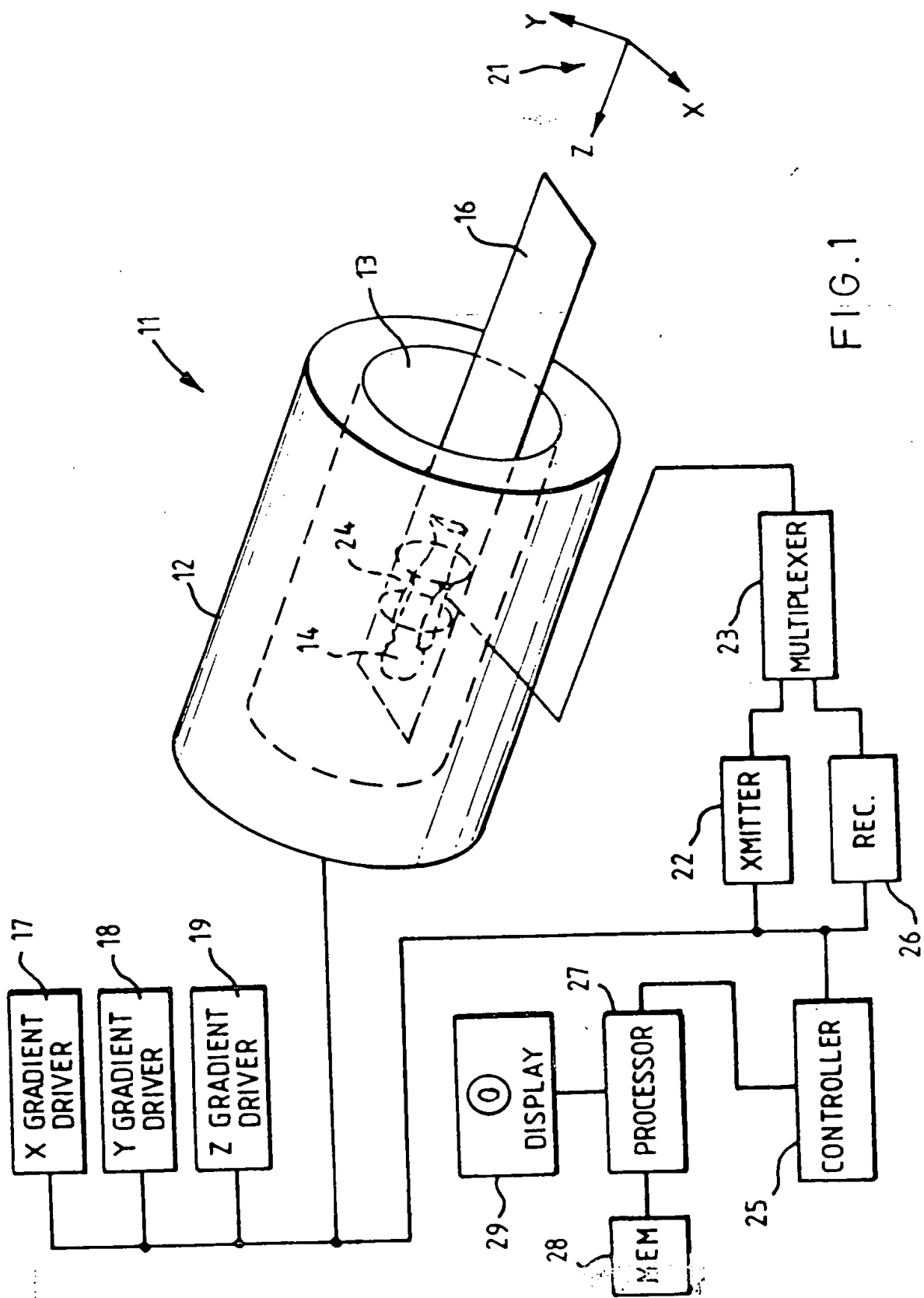


FIG. 1

Figure 2(a)

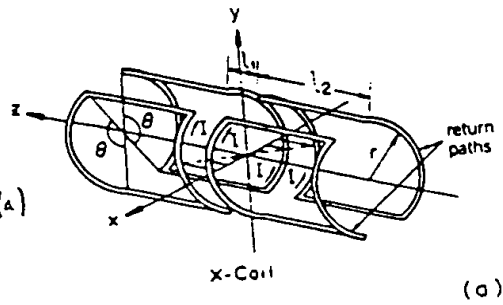


Figure 2(b)

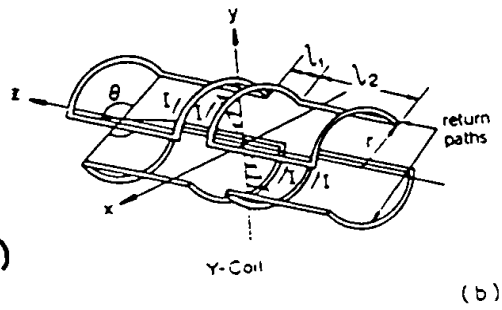


Figure 2(c)

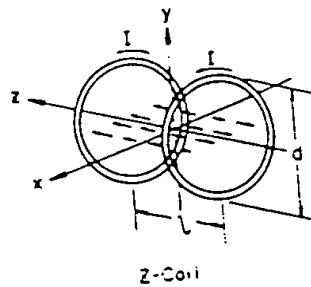


Figure 3(a)

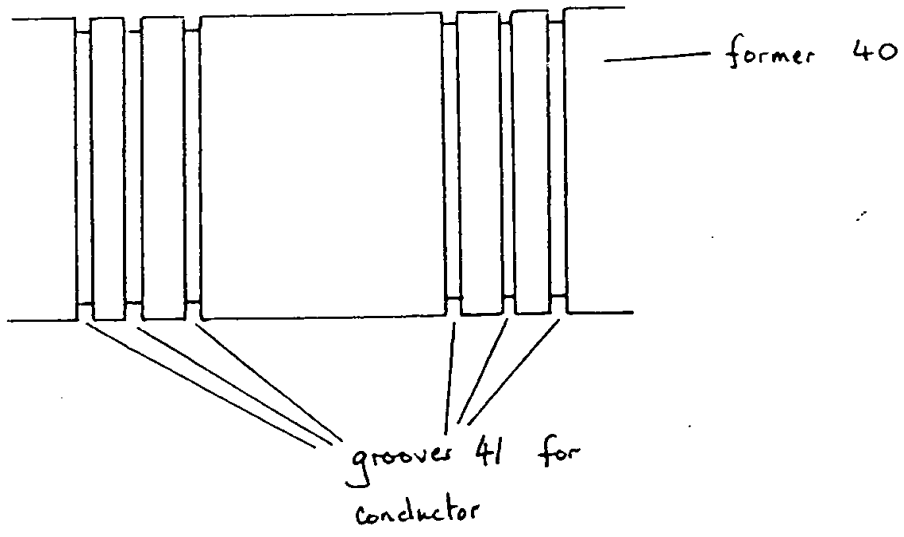


Figure 3(b)

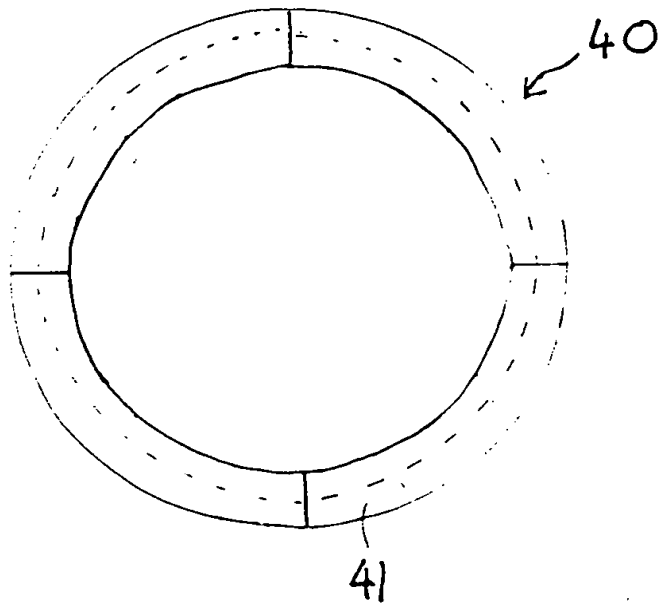


Figure 4